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Boozman Bulletin: Staying in Contact

As a Senator, I travel weekly from Arkansas to Washington. As I cast votes on the Senate floor, ask questions in hearings or visit with Arkansans in meetings, my concern is always how the actions of Congress will impact you. In order to understand your concerns, it's important for me to stay in touch. This is particularly challenging when we are in session in Washington.

Fortunately, technology is making it easier. I recently hosted an internet forum called Crowdhall to get your feedback and have an open dialogue with residents as to what questions are on the minds of Arkansans. We had a great response and I appreciate the time you took to participate. [Click here](#) to read the questions that were asked and my responses to topics such as immigration, tax reform and spending.

An open line of communication with my constituents is the best way to fulfill my commitment to the people of Arkansas. I think one of the best tools we can use to help keep our constituents informed is the ability to interact live in a tele-town hall format. We've hosted several tele-townhalls already this year. I look forward to more in the coming months and hope to have you [join our call](#).

I'm always interested in your feedback. You may remember in our last newsletter I asked you questions about sequestration. I want to share with you the results of the survey.

1) The sequester cuts are starting to take effect. Do you believe these cuts will help put the U.S. on a more financially sound footing?

Yes, it needs to be done **21%**

Not ideal, but something had to be done **40%**

No, I do not think this is a good way to address our spending problem **36%**

Unsure **3%**

2) Which alternatives to sequestration do you support?

Targeted spending cuts **92%**

Tax increases **6%**

I support sequestration **1%**

Unsure **1%**

3) What proposals do you support to cut spending?

A balanced budget amendment to the Constitution **57%**

Targeted cuts **33%**

Sequestration **2%**

Raise taxes instead **7%**

Unsure **1%**

4) The debt limit expires this summer. Should Congress enact additional cuts or entitlement reforms in order to raise the ceiling?

Yes **37%**

No **32%**

Unsure **31%**

Quick Takes:

- **IRS:** The Internal Revenue Service admitted that it [unfairly targeted conservative groups](#). Biased treatment based on political beliefs will not be tolerated. There are a lot of questions that need to be answered by top officials at the agency and there will be consequences for those who carried out these unjust actions.
- **Benghazi:** The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee recently heard testimony from career diplomats stationed in Libya about what happened before and during the Benghazi terror attack of September 11, 2012. Watch as I lay out my concerns about the accounts in [this edition of "From the Mailbag."](#)
- **Reviewing Illegal Abortion Practices:** Dr. Kermit Gosnell, the Philadelphia doctor who performed late-term abortions was found guilty last week of murdering three babies born alive at his clinic. [My colleagues and I introduced a resolution](#) asking the Senate to review public policies that led to these illegal abortion practices and calls on Congress "to investigate and correct abusive, unsanitary, and illegal abortion practices."
- **VA Backlogs:** Hundreds of thousands of veterans are impacted by the [claims](#)

[backlog at the Department of Veterans Affairs](#). The wait time for initial disability claims is almost a full year. This is unacceptable and I recently joined my Senate colleagues in asking for answers from the administration.

- **UAV Military Medals:** We encouraged Department of Defense [Secretary Chuck Hagel to review the a proposed new military medal](#) for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) pilots and cyber warriors that was set to be ranked higher than the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. DOD said it would instead develop a special pin or device that would be attached to already existing medals or ribbons.
- **Helping Servicemembers Transition to Civilian Life:** I joined Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV), Jerry Moran (R-KS) and Jon Tester (D-MT) to introduce legislation allowing servicemembers to use their GI Bill benefits to provide them with the tools for a successful transition into civilian life by requiring that men and women leaving military life [be given the choice of education tracks as part of mandatory Transitional Assistance Program \(TAP\) classes](#).
- **Bipartisan Legislation to Continue Program Serving Wounded Warriors Introduced:** [Senator Begich \(D-AK\) and I introduced legislation to extend the authorization for the U.S. Paralympic Integrated Adaptive Sports Program](#) which partners with local organizations to develop programs and skills that meet the needs of our wounded warriors.
- **Farm Bill:** The [Senate Agriculture committee passed its version of the Farm Bill](#) last week. This bill is much [more fair for crops all across the country](#). The bill is up for debate on the Senate floor and we're continuing to improve the legislation to provide certainty to Arkansas agriculture producers.
- **Health Care Law:** Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, who is in charge of implementing President Obama's health care law, appeared before the Senate Appropriations Committee in late April. I took the opportunity [to ask her how businesses are expected to stay competitive](#) and maintain their workforce while complying with the burdensome mandates imposed by the law.
- **Votes to Protect Second Amendment Rights:** I [voted to protect the Second Amendment](#) by opposing Majority-led efforts to erode the Constitutional rights of law-abiding citizens.
- **Advice and Consent:** For years the EPA has ignored repeated requests by Congress for data supporting policies and rules established by the agency. Hoping to put an end to this pattern, I [asked the administration's nominee to head the EPA, Gina McCarthy, about her intention to change the agency's rulemaking policy](#) during her recent nomination hearing. Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution gives the Senate the exclusive right to provide advice and consent to the president on treaties and nominations including Cabinet secretaries, federal judges, and ambassadors. In this edition of "From the Mailbag," I [discuss this role and recent](#)

[nominees to the Cabinet.](#)

- **Bill to Increase US Exports to Africa Introduced:** When we talk about job creation, free and fair trade is a vital component to a successful plan. [An effective trade strategy with African nations will help us significantly add jobs here at home.](#) The eagerness and willingness to be good trade partners on the part of African nations is there. The desire for American products, along with our ideals, is strong. The only thing missing is a cohesive strategy on our end. That is what we are aiming to create with [this legislation](#).
- **Fighting Hunger:** We were awarded the Congressional Hunger Center's Bill Emerson & Mickey Leland Hunger Leadership Award for our [commitment and dedication to the fight against hunger](#). As a co-chair of the Senate Hunger Caucus, I'm working to raise awareness and resources to address domestic and international hunger issues.
- **Improving Water Resources:** The Senate recently passed the [Water Resources Development Act \(WRDA\), a major water resources law](#) that included two amendments we introduced. This legislation improved oversight of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects in Arkansas as well as provides more reliable maintenance of Arkansas ports on the Mississippi River.

